

# *Kitan Magazine*



**Volume Three**

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## **Kitan Magazine: Volume Three**

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Cover picture: Two Geisha swimming in the ocean

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## Prologue: Kitan Magazine

*Le Minotaur Press* of Vancouver is pleased to publish this third volume of ***Kitan*** Magazine which serves to feature the work of remarkable writers, poets & artists.

*Kitan* means tale in Japanese. This Magazine is about the excitement, adventure, romance, Love and Eros of the Orient.

***Kitan*** Magazine welcomes submissions on a biannual basis.

Please feel free to submit your submissions to

penny\_plenty321@yahoo.com

There is no fee to submit. There is no writer's fee provided by the journal for those who submit. The publishing rights remain with the writer.

## Kitan Prose:

## ***The Story of Ran by Estella Zhang***

[Shanghai] In Ran's memory, Chongqing has always been a city of mountains and roads. But Chongqing now seemed to be different from what it had been. He could still picture the city clearly in his memories, but the city seemed to have forgotten him. The muddy paths and stairs that used to map the city had been replaced with newly built roads, roaring with cars. The stilted buildings on the edge of the mountains—his home, were now replaced with tall buildings, rows, and rows of them, lining up the city like Russian blocks. The sidewalks that used to be the shelters of strays and small shops selling homemade snacks that were always packed with people were now replaced with flowers planted in patterns, orderly arranged. Ran couldn't help but feel his heart ache when he sat on his short stool, looking across the river at the city of blazing lights. The flowers were pretty. The roads were wide and clean. The buildings were organized. But everything seemed so...modern. He felt as if this place was not his home anymore.

Ran is an old resident of Chongqing. He was born here, and when he was young, the stairs and winding paths were his playground. Chongqing is a city of mountains and bridges. As a child, he could remember his family of five all cluttering in a room of a two-story building built by wood and bamboo. There was little space in his little home, they could only afford to treat themselves to meat once a month, and he had to help his mother take care of his siblings as he was the eldest. Life was hard, but at least he had a family.



When Ran grew older, he made a living by carrying heavy luggage on a pole for his customers, the same job his father had done all his life. In his youth and middle aged years, Chongqing was full of winding staircases and there were no good roads to drive on and little cars. He would find a place with many pedestrians, and sit on his three-legged stool, and wait for those in need to carry heavy things to come find him. Business was good. Sometimes he carried oil and rice, sometimes heavy rocks, sometimes luggage...No matter how heavy, he would always take the opportunity. Almost Every path in Chongqing had his footprints.

The summer of this city is boiling. Under the forty degrees sun, sweat drops would roll down his face like big pearls. He was happy during summer because many do not want to carry things in this hot weather. Business was especially good this season. His father had always told him that he should always carry the bamboo stick on his back, because it deserves respect for accompanying him throughout these many years. He always stuck to that rule, never holding his old friend in his hand. He could not have a luxurious life with his job, but he could make a living by working hard, and that was enough for him. He was making money from his own hands. He was happy.

However, as the years went by, Chongqing built many roads and tall buildings. The streets cluttered with people were now highways roaring with cars. Ran and his bamboo stick seemed both forlorn and out of place in this new and developing country. Even worse, he was not as strong as he used to be. His spine was bent from all these years of carrying things on his shoulders, his hair has only a few streaks of black left, his rough and tanned skin loose,

and his strength ebbing away day by day. Almost everyone drove cars now, and there were little customers left. He tried looking for people that wanted to move, but moving companies had trucks bigger and quicker than him. He tried in front of schools at the starting season to see if any students needed help carrying books, but in their youth, they could carry things by themselves. He tried looking for more “modern” jobs, like taping signs on the subway or assembling boards of public bathrooms. These jobs took less strength, but he always messed them up. Either the taping was not neat enough, or he messed up the men and women’s sign because he could not read. After trying all the other jobs he could find, he went back to his bamboo stick.

The city of which the roads he could all memorize had changed. He used to be proud, thinking that his sweat and footprints had helped to build it. But now, as the city’ roads became longer, the roads he could walk on were disappearing.

## ***What I Thought of Japan by Brendan Ritchie***

[**New York**] The Japanese have gained a reputation as a polite, industrious, and peaceable people. However, this past summer I had the opportunity to pay a brief visit to the country, and my impressions were not positive. In fact, there are many things wrong with Japan. Anything like an exhaustive list would be impossible, but it's plain that the good reputation is undeserved.

One of the first things I noticed was the abundance of rice paddies—an astonishing thing in such a densely populated and highly industrial nation. Thousands of them are squeezed in even between Tokyo—a city of 30 million—and its busy international airport, never mind everywhere else.

So much for industriousness. The country is a giant make-work project.

Secondly, children in Japan are very unruly, despite official attempts to disguise the fact with uniforms. They will approach any foreigner to say hello, and if you say hello in return they will laugh madly. A traveling companion suggested to me that the children are excited to have opportunities to use their limited English. As if explaining their behavior makes it any less rude.

I had a similar experience with teenage girls, who were constantly smiling and waving at me. Apparently just because I'm Caucasian, and tall, and really also pretty handsome, I guess, if I'm going to avoid false modesty. Now, there is a temptation to find this kind of attention charming. But if you think about it, it's actually pretty racist.

Adults were unfailingly polite and helpful to me. Again, that doesn't seem like such a bad thing at first. But it becomes pretty obvious that it must be a kind of front just for foreigners. There can hardly be any doubt that the Japanese treat each other very badly.

So much for politeness, then. It's a sham.

The famous rail network deserves mention. It's extensive, and the trains are frequent, fast, and punctual. In fact it all seems a bit obsessive, and a bit cramping, too, really, if—as a tourist—you just want to maintain a casual pace. And of course we all know who else made the trains run on time.

Indeed, subtle hints of a fascistic public spirit can be found everywhere. Two simple examples: outdoor vending machines are common, and there are clean and plentiful toilets in all subway stations. These facilities would not be possible in North America, where the machines would be burgled and the toilets vandalized. So how did the Japanese become beaten down to such a degree that these amenities became possible?

If you want to call that peaceable, go ahead. But the realist sees only broken spirits.

And let's not forget the many practical problems faced by the visitor. The Japanese are too small. I banged my head a good deal. Also, the Japanese

don't speak English. Everyone else has picked up at least a bit of English by now, so that's just spitefulness.

Also, I got a sunburn.

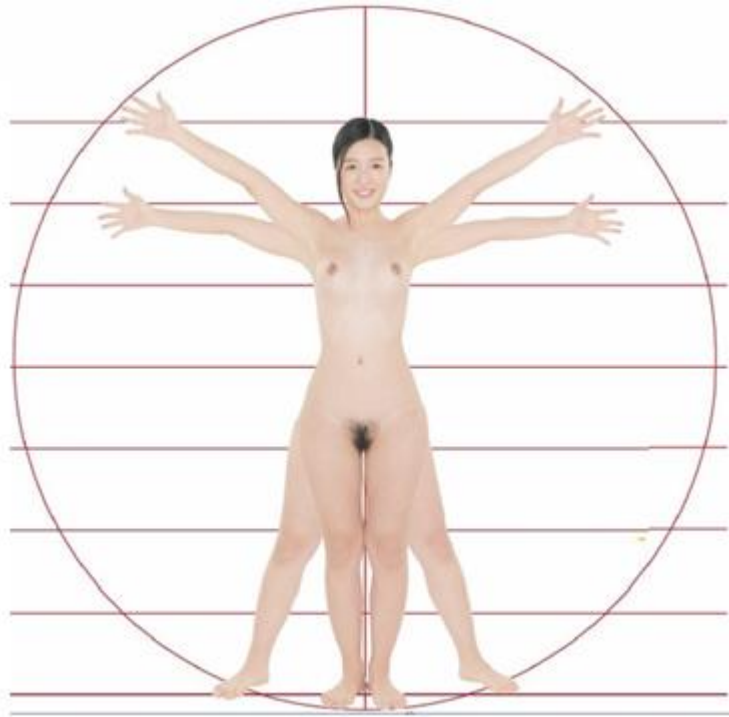
You might argue that the last one is my own fault, but you would be wrong.

In sum, it would be easy to come to the view that Japan is a beautiful and welcoming country, a nation highly advanced both technologically and culturally. You might even start to suspect that Japan is superior to North America in many ways, or maybe all ways. You might start to think about picking up your life and moving to a place where people treat each other with respect, where life is comfortable and crime nonexistent, and where pretty girls notice you.

Not that I thought any of those things myself. I saw through all that.

{TGS, Nov. 2009}

## Pictorial: Vitruvian Mei Mei



## ***Quantum Tears by Rune***

### NAVIGATORS OF INFINITY

A quantum of tears fell. The city is a citadel, as well as a living hell, where chaos reigns. Rays of light, sutures in the night, crystalline azure, glistened in the rain. Succumbing to the nostalgic, taking refuge in the mundane; I'm walking down memory lane, through a capillary network of coiled, velvet veins. I'm seeking an asylum for the sane, a fortress of solitude secluded in the heart of a crystal metropolis. Digital gravestones along the necropolis, video greetings of the populous, lead me along the path to the towering acropolis.

As sepia seeps through the twilight, superimposed on stagnant puddles of decadence, reflecting a neon highrise illuminated by a lemon limelight; a firefly hovered before me, vibrating and iridescent, its presence incandescent, cutting through the night like the crescent of the moon. Within a chrome cocoon, trajectories of my thoughts morph from an absence of substance into sentient protoplasm. Phantom vector lines trace the lament and equilibrium of my unilateral descent: my path of perseverance in this miasma. Much like a bottomless chasm of sarcasm, a convex fold, or elevation in the brain is telling me it's all a phantasm.

An aura of soliloquies instilled in me, the sapience of my sentience, prevents me from plummeting into a depth of despair I can't fathom. I suppose I'm out of repose, as such is agony when feelings expose at random. The words on the

paper are just shadows of my thoughts. Amorph. I sense the sentences. Disfigured. Misprinted. The pictures become whispers. I can hear the future spoken in the distance. Resistance is futile. Beguiled. I took shelter in a dream, but it buried me alive, now I reside submersed in liquid, trapped inside a hibernation capsule reliving the day I died, and my love with it.

The first time I met her, my eyes gazed – as a wormhole ripped open the fabric of space, which I took as a sign to close with an embrace. Living under a sky where no sun streaks, I always thought the future seemed bleak, and that darkness would fall upon us all – until I felt her lips on my cheek. Sweet fragrance, flower-scented, surrounds me in your presence. Tears perspire. My eyes sore red from the smell of burning incense and souls on fire. Your face cut in sapphire, a jewel more precious than the grandest diamond. Curving through cosmos like a meteor stream, a love so pure, sublime and serene – a dream contemptuous of space and time.

An experiment gone wrong, sound accumulates at the bottom of her lungs. She touches the sheath of the cable, sliding it through the hollow of her hand. The ear drums vibrates, hypnotic rhythms, as the full voltage of the current ran through her system. There's a spark in her eyes, a red glow in her pupils, a chaotic beauty, which compensates for the vigorous motion of her body. Her breaths are short, the pulse is slow. I could see it in her eyes, frozen tears too cold to face. Revived aboard a colony ship in space, I'm tired of this cryogenic nightmare that I can't erase.



Red snow. I'm bleeding flakes of ice shaped like the petals of an arctic rose. Draped in a mistral cloak, I'm a ghost, departing the body that used to be my host. If only you could see through my flesh, watch my heart as it glows, purple distress signals flashing in Morse Code. And as luck would have it, after the odds were set, and the sun spun like a golden marble in a galactic roulette, I asked to bet my soul for a glimpse into the future. I was promised to peer through a rift in space and time before an omnipotent ethereal entity closed the suture.

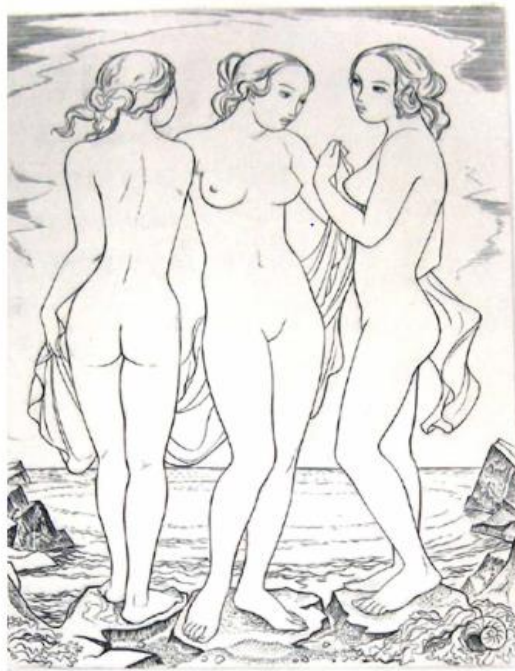
Correlated particles depart from the core of my heart. Contents concentrated on the constant flux. Conjunctions are copulative, tear channels become aqueducts. My cerebral cortex is like a vortex which itself destructs. I blend with the fabric of origami dreams in the eternal sleep. Folding a solitary retreat where I will rest in peace. Forever wondering when I will awake. The light in the end of the tunnel spins in retrogrades. Conchlias that never took shape still felt the calm contrasts to the constant rhythm of my exponential heart rate. Death: it is a distance measured in one deep breath. The last exhale.

Beneath a steel sky blocking the sun, I felt like I weighed a ton. Resting on pillows of clouds, a shroud of darkness surrounds me. Infinity my boundary. I felt very much at peace, as the sun circled around the rim of a black hole and the gravity of the situation began to increase. I saw the sun set, in a pocket of space where time is known to freeze. Expecting my chances to spiral out of control, I decided to keep my soul, leave the future alone, and give back the time I stole to be born again. My friend, you could drain your life, and not know your heart is in it. Fold your hands with me, time is infinite. I pray from

this moment on, to my last deciding minute: my spirit will not be a ghost if there's no soul in it.

{TGS, Feb. 2010}

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## ***On Visiting Vancouver a Second Time by Aki Kurosawa***

[Tokyo] About ten years ago, in 2010, I visited Vancouver with my parents to come watch the Winter Olympics. This was the first time I had travelled outside of Japan. I was twelve. Before visiting Vancouver for the first time all the previous trips I took were to visit family and friend in different prefectures around Japan.

Four years ago I revisited Vancouver a second time, this time by myself. Well, actually not by myself ... but without my parents. I had graduated high-school but not started university and came for a two month visit to improve my English. I, along with six other Japanese women who were my friends, or friends of my friends, together decided to take a “learning-holiday” to Vancouver. We had all enrolled at the same language day school in downtown Vancouver, and were staying with different host families. One of us worked for JAL and was able to arrange affordable air fares for us all.

Of the seven of us, I was the only one who had visited Vancouver before and although I was not the oldest in the group (she was five years older than anyone else), I was chosen into the role of ‘big sister’ to the group. It turns out I spoke English the best of the group. You may have noticed that Japanese boys are very independent, while Japanese girls find their safety and comfort in groups.

In Japan we all study a second language in high school. Most decide to study English as a second language, some a European language like French, German

or Italian, and some decide to learn Mandarin or Korean. My father is a petroleum trader for the Japanese Government who travels throughout the world. He is sometimes away for months. He has encouraged me and my younger sister to learn more than just two languages and so we have been learning several languages. I chose English and French – which I understand are the two official languages of Canada.

My youngest sister, just to be different, is learning both German and Russian. She dreams of one day taking a boat from Japan to Vladivostok and then the trans-Siberian railroad to St. Petersburg, and then onto Berlin. She is artistic and the avant garde one in our family, and is constantly rebellious. Perhaps it is because she is the youngest, or perhaps it was her love of the Pasternak film *Dr. Zhivago*? She hangs out with a Russian girl her age, Laura, who is a bit of a feline ... and who comes from Vladivostok. Her father teaches at university. Her mother stayed home in Russia. Laura comes to visit Japan when she is not at school.

The rest of the family are still trying to figure out why my younger sister wants to learn German? I think it is because she has heard that Berlin is a wild city ... which she wants to one day visit ...

My sister wanted to come with me to Vancouver to study English, but my parents decided against this. It wasn't merely because she is still in high-school it is also because she gets into trouble all the time. It was also because of her cat like character ... she is very much a creature of the night ... constantly on the prowl for the life pleasures. Rumor has it that last year she

appeared in a film of the night life of Tokyo that is ... not meant for our parents to see.

The fact that my younger sister is a rebel has been a secret incentive on me to be defiant too, but in my own secret way. It being my first trip alone ... my second trip to Vancouver might perhaps gave me the first freedom to be rebellious.

The oldest of our group of seven had just broken up with her long time boy friend. They had first met in high school and had been seeing each other for ten years. He was the only boy she had really gotten to know. They had broken up when she found out he was being unfaithful to her. They were a few months away from being married when she had broken their engagement. He ran off with the other girl, a teenager who was the very young sister of one of his 'old school friends.'

Her boy friend was ... a sponge off of her and so she was glad to be rid of him. He had no job ... did not want to go to university ... and didn't care that he still lived at home and spent all his free time playing video games. He is what we in Japan call Otaku.

She was the one who had a job with Japan Airlines and had arranged the special air fares for us. She was also who suggested the seven of us come for a learning-holiday in Vancouver. She came to Vancouver because she needed a change of scenery. When she came she was sad ... and when she left she was happy again ... but in a very different way.

In actual fact the seven of us were very different from each other. The oldest of us was tall and slim, the youngest short and chubby and by chance the rest of us fit into a line of different hair styles, different clothes and different lifestyles, somewhere in between. Some of us were morning types and some night types. I was sort of in the middle. When we went out together I imagine that a perfect stranger would look at us and think that the only three things we had in common were that we were young, Japanese and women. But one man called us all girls!

I had to ask a Canadian friend what is the linguistic difference between being called a girl and being considered a women. He smiled and asked me, “Would you like an official definition or a colloquial one?”

Being curious I asked him for both.

“Officially,” he said, “a girl is a female who has yet to reach puberty ... and a women is one who now is fully herself ...” I sort of understood. “And the unofficial one?” I asked.

“Well “ he smiled, “ I don’t know you that well .. and I don’t want to shock you.” This only made me more curious and so I said “please tell me!”

“Here on the streets of Vancouver the definition of a girl and a woman is that they have had very different life experiences.” I still did not understand him

and so I frowned. He shrugged his shoulders “a girl is a virgin, and a woman is not ...”

“Is that the same difference between a boy and a man?” I immediately asked him.

“You tell me ,,,” he smiled. “I doubt any of you are girls.” I blushed when he said this. We changed the subject.

I would later find out that when we arrived in Vancouver two of the seven of us were in fact just that ... but none were by the time we had left for home. It’s not what you think though, for we have two expressions in Japan that a “coin has two sides ...” and “a coin is easily flipped.”

A week after we arrived the youngest of us, the chubby one, had her hair cut short and for most of her time in Vancouver dressed like a boy.

The other one found herself a ‘boy friend’ and is now married to him and lives in Vancouver. He is one of the language instructors we had. She didn’t fly home with us at the end of our “learning-holiday.” She had come to Vancouver to stay. As I write this they are expecting a baby.

Our visits to Vancouver changed each of us, but in different ways. We were all happy to be in a smaller city with less people crowding around us. Vancouver might be a big city in Canada but it hardly compares to a small city on Japan. We were all happy to be distinct, instead of lost in a crowd of

other black haired and black eyed Japanese, and well there is something about being a Japanese ‘girl’ in the eyes of Canadian men that makes it easy for us to make new friends.

The seven of us had a different definition of what ‘being friends’ meant. The youngest of us had a friend who ... well ... was very different than all the others we met. Her friend was intense and quick to judge. We found it hard to be around her. The youngest didn’t mind for she was very submissive, more so than a Japanese woman normally is. And the play they got into was ‘very rough and tumble.’ But that is what she wanted.

About half-way through our stay in Vancouver she asked me to come with her to a ‘special event’ she had been invited to in Burnaby on a Saturday night at a place called “the dungeon.” The only reason I agreed to go was that all the others had turned her down and I was the last one she had to ask. Even though I wanted to, I could not say no. She being the youngest I felt an obligation to protect her. But in retrospect I am not sure she wanted to be ... protected.

I had heard that such places existed but never imagined I would ever find myself in one of them. There were three of us when we arrived, the youngest one, her ‘girlfriend’ and me as a chaperone of sorts. But after only a few minutes inside the dark and evil place, the two of them disappeared and I had to leave! It was something out of a cheap horror film. Why people would chose to allow themselves to be humiliated like this I will never know! She arrived several hours late at school on Monday wearing long socks and wrist bands to hide her ‘rough and tumble’. Neither of us talked about her ‘Saturday



night.’ We sort of drifted apart after that. She also stopped going to language school the middle of that week. She moved out from her home stay and in with her ‘girlfriend.’ That was the last we heard of her

I told my Canadian friend about this and he said it was her “Satyr-day night.” At first I did not understand what he meant, but he spelled it out for me. I asked him whether he had ever been at a place like this. He said no ... but in such a way that I felt I had to ask him “would you ever go to such a place?”

“It depends ...

“On what ?”

“I guess ... if I was going to watch or going to be watched”

I found his answer so unexpected. So I asked him what he meant. He suggested I ask my friend and so right then and there I called her up and spoke to her. When I asked her why ... I got a response I had not expected. “So desu!”

My Canadian friend does not speak Japanese but he recognized my exclamation and so after I got off the phone he asked and I told him. “She had gone not to watch ... but to be watched!”

“Are you surprised?” was what he asked before he raised his hand up to say stop! “Let’s talk about something else ...”. I wanted to talk with him about this but decided to wait another time.

The other four of us came to visit Vancouver for different reasons. One enjoyed hiking and quickly took to visiting the different parks in Vancouver and on the North Shore of Vancouver. On the weekdays she would all but disappear and then reappear in a very blissful state on Monday morning in our language school classes. In the space of a few weeks she had a lovely tan and many stories to share with us. At the last evening together she screened a compilation of different short films she had made of her hikes around Vancouver. I must admit then and there I regretted not tagging along on some of her hikes.

Three were in Vancouver to learn English. Two of my friends visited the UBC and SFU with the hope of going to university in Vancouver. One just enjoyed travelling and had been to Paris and Florence but had never been to Canada. She had heard very interesting stories about Vancouver and spent most of her free time exploring the city and enjoying the beach life. She had a date for every night of the week. She told us that her main goal in life was to enjoy herself “before it was too late.” The rest of us had our own ideas as to what she meant by “before it was too late.” I could not see her settling down and getting married ...

There was one hike all seven of us took together and that was to see part of Stanley Park. This was where I met my Canadian friend for the first time. He

had offered to take one of us for a visit (they had both met at a Saturday afternoon conversation club that gathered at a café on Granville Street near the waterfront station) and well ... since Japanese women always travel together, the other six of us showed up. We met him at the bus loop near the rose garden in Stanley Park. When he arrived he was amused to see six of us waiting for him and all of us waiting for the last one of us to join the group outing. She was not a morning person and we had made arrangements to meet at 10 and she was late as usual. When she arrived twenty minutes late she had not even had breakfast and so we had to dig in our bags to find her something to eat. Then we all set out to explore Stanley Park. We visited the aquarium and then walked back to the Rose garden and then past Lost Lagoon. We set off to English Bay and when we got there it was time to sit and rest.

I wanted to talk with him and so I sat next to my new Canadian friend.

He was both polite and charming and I instantly began to like him. I asked him why he wanted to take us on a tour of Stanley Park. "I am in paradise ... me and seven beautiful women!" We walked along the sea wall towards Kitsilano but decide to turn back because it was now 2 in the afternoon and there were things some of my friends had to do that afternoon.

As we walked back down Denman Street he treated us to ice cream. "It doesn't cost me a cent," he said. "I am an author and the ice cream is paid for out of my book royalty fund." I noticed though that he didn't order himself any ice cream. When I asked him why he joked and said "I am a growing boy ... but I am growing sideways." We were all very happy, even the chubby

one. But then again she had a triple scoop! Just before we went our separate ways on Georgia and Denman, and when no one was watching I gave him my email, and he gave me his.

After waiting a few days and not hearing from him I emailed him and the following Saturday, instead of going to the conversation club meeting he and I walked down Robson and then sat for coffee at a place that make wonderful poppy cake, which he suggested I try. Then we talked. Well ... I talked and he mostly listened. Most men like to talk about themselves but ... he just listened.

I asked him why he goes to the conversation club and he said it was to listen to stories. He like to write short stories and by listening to other people share their life experiences it gave him ideas for stories. I asked him if I had given him ideas and he smiled and said, enigmatically, “yes you have given me ideas ...”

“What kind?” I asked him.

“Romantic ones ...” He lowered his eyes and his voice as he said this. I sensed his shyness and his sincerity so I reached across the table and put my hand on his. It felt warm ... or it might have been my hand that was warm.

I felt wet between my legs. That had never really happen to me before. I had not come to Vancouver to fall in love ... but sometimes love is inevitable.

In Tokyo, back home, I had several friends who were ... well ... boyfriends of sorts but not any that I felt all that close to. I knew most of them from high school. It is expected that an eligible Japanese women would date. It is expected that Japanese women would chose to either be a career woman or a wife. It was not expected that a Japanese woman would fall in love with a man half way around the world. I had to hide my feelings. But I found that very hard to do. I wasn't a girl any more!

For the rest of my visit to Vancouver I tried to find an excuse to see him at least twice a week and he sort of understood my feelings, but he was careful not to take advantage of me. He told me that as a Catholic he knew the difference between love and lust. He had once been married and I asked and he said he had no children of his own. There was a very sincere sadness in his eyes as he said this. "Things didn't work out."

It was the evening before I returned home we went for dinner and afterwards, as he walked me to my bus, I finally had the courage to ask him about his comment "are you surprised ... she wanted to be watched?"

He turned to me and whispered "In an empty life ... we all want to be noticed ..."

I kissed him on the cheek and did not turn back as I stepped onto the bus. I did not want him to see my tears.

## ***Le Bordel by Sophie***

[**Vancouver**] Recently I was asked to write about the darker side of love in art for an art history course. I chose to write about one of the iconic paintings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most remarkable and controversial paintings of the last century was the 1907 painting by Pablo Picasso know as *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* now hanging in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The painting represents the darker side of love in art.



**Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, Pablo Picasso, 1907 (MOMA)**

Picasso himself called the painting *Le Bordel* because of the subject matter, which is that of five young nude prostitutes in several provocative figurative poses. The painting represents an artistic commentary by the artist who himself visited the many interesting brothels of France, including the brothels in Avignon.

The 2.44 m x 2.34 m oil painting is done in a primitive cubist style with raw colours and has no set perspective. This is one of the first monumental paintings done in the cubist style. In and above the subject matter, in painting this work of art Picasso abandoned perspective and rendered a large scale painting in a radical fashion.

The faces or visages of the five young women run the gamut (left to right) of representation to African primitive. The Venus of Delta is evident in several of the figures, however without defining features. The breasts of four of the five figures are evident, with the right hand woman sitting showing her back and backside to the viewer.

Two of the five prostitutes peer menacing at the viewer (the two women on the right hand side of the painting). Several of the women are rendered with cubist body shapes. The three figures on the left have facial expressions that reflect the Picasso's Iberian style, while the two on the right are shown with primitive mask faces.



Prostitution was hardly a new topic for European painters. For instance there is Francois Boucher's famous 1753 painting of Miss Murphy who was a famous concubine.



**Miss Murphy, Francois Boucher, 1753**

This 18<sup>th</sup> century French painting was done at the request of the patron of Miss Murphy, the King of France. It does not show much of the figure of Miss Murphy but the rosy hue to her skin incites a heightened sense of imagination.

Two 19<sup>th</sup> century paintings on the subject of prostitution and the darker side of love in art are *Olympia* and *Dejeuner sur l'Herbe* both by the French Impressionist painter Edouard Manet.





**Olympia, Edouard Manet, 1865 (Musee d'Orsay)**

In this painting, Olympia is a famous concubine of the time and she looks out at the viewer in a resigned sense, painting the men in the audience as her patrons. Much of her figure is evident with her hand modestly placed across her femininity. You notice she is blushing, acknowledging that she is being viewed not as a work of art but as a woman who works another art, that of the prostitute.

Another painting that deals with the pleasures of the flesh is *Dejeuner sur l'Herbe*



**Dejeuner sur l'Herbe, Eduoard Manet, 1863 (Musee d'Orsay)**

This painting is subtle in its message and can be seen in many different ways.

How is Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* so different from other paintings about prostitution? It is because the painter Picasso is so different from his compatriots. It is in his nature to shock and he does this time and time again. There are only a few paintings that shock as much as Picasso aims to do, such as Gustave Courbet's painting *L'Origine de la Monde* and Orlan's 1989 spoof of Courbet, *L'Origine de la Guerre* with a male model (modesty prevents me from including these two works of art in my essay). Courbet's painting, which depicts a close-up view of the genitals and abdomen of a naked woman, shocked the Parisian artworld when it was first unveiled in 1866, around the

time that Eduoard Manet was showing his two paintings. We now know that an actual model sat for *L'Origine de la Monde* and that the model was a ballet dancer named Constance Queniaux. Picasso knew of and studied the artwork of Manet and Courbet.

For Picasso he would continue to shock after unveiling *Les Femmes d'Alger*. For instance he had his Minotaur series from the 1930's which Picasso admits was a self-portrait of his angst and appetites.



**Minotaur and Sleeping Woman, Picasso**



### Minotaur as Bacchanal, Picasso

He had a love / hate relationship with woman, sometimes seeing them as goddesses and sometime not. He had many lovers in his life and fathered several children. He could not walk past a pretty woman without stopping to flirt with them. There are several books about Picasso and a famous movie *Life with Picasso*, based on a book by one of his lovers.

Some art historians have suggested that Pablo Picasso had a rather large libido and a certain misogynist side to him. You can sometimes see that in his art. For instance how else can one interpret his *Le Minotaure et la Femme*?





### **Le Minotaure et la Femme, Picasso**

You can sense in his 1907 painting of a brothel in Avignon that Picasso's had both an appetite and an angst that reflected his view of women as goddesses and as concubine, and that his art from time to reflected the darker side to art.

## ***My Little Confession by Amelia***

What was the first time I say a penis?

It was when I was thirteen. My parents let me babysit my next door neighbor's 5 year old daughter and one year old son for a few hours as they went out for a romantic evening. They told me the baby had been fed and changed and he would sleep through the night.

At around ten he started to cry and his sister got up and told me 'I will have to change him.' I had never changed a baby's diapers before. Lucky for me he had just peed. My mother had to come over and show me how to do this. OMG ... so that's what a boy looks like.

It was then that my mother sat me down and told me about the birds and the bees for the second time. I had been having my period for some time and so it was time for her to tell me the other half of the story ... all about boys.

Then she left me there all by myself, imaging what boys do to girls. So ... I went to have another look. It seemed so small and so soft. His little sis 'caught me in the act.' I was so embarrassed.

Then she did sometime I will never forget. She took her little finger and ran it up and down his penis and voila ... it was no longer small and soft.

Then she turned to me and said ...”I know he likes that ... isn’t it beautiful!”  
I let her stay up until her parents got home ... in case the baby cried again.



**Herbert List, Little Brother, 1953**

## ***A Valentine's Day Gift for Sophia by Patrick Bruskiewich***

It is rather hard being a girl in the modern age. I have a friend named Sophia (not her real name) who is somewhat younger than me. She is a very moral person and does not let her boyfriends even get to first base. So boyfriends come and go like days of the week. Third base is out of the question. She wants to wait until she is married.

As a Catholic I find this commendable. When she asked me about this, in frustration; I told her that I waited until my wedding night. This revelation brought her respite from the daily peer pressure she endures from the randy roosters crowing around her, and from the hysterical hens, in her school. Sophia is a middle school student at an upscale private school. She is from China and is caught between two very different worlds. At times it is too much for her.

For the first time this Valentine's Day she is without her own Valentine. Her feelings are hurt. To bolster her a bit I sang her the old rhyme

*... A girl and her boy friend sitting in a tree, K I S S I N G, first comes love,  
... then comes marriage ... then comes a baby in a baby carriage ...*

Sophia hasn't even kissed a boy.

I tutor Sophia middle school science. Her curriculum this year includes 'the birds and the bees.' Describing in a most prudent fashion the process by which



girl meets boy, girl and boy become intimate and well girl becomes a mother, got an exclamation from Sophia ...'I think I will adopt, thank you!'

Gametes got her a back into her science, but realizing that the male haploid are like motor boats swimming within a woman's uterus was a bit too much for her. When she realized the human ovum was the size of the dot at the end of this sentence, and a full grown baby came from this, this put things into perspective for her. It is hard being a girl in the modern age. There is so much they need to think about.

Unlike me, Sophia is not Catholic. Her decision to wait is not a reflection of a religious morality. Her decision to wait until marriage is a wise one that reflects both her heritage and a respect for her own reproductive health. The idea of 250 million miniscule spermatozoa swimming freely within her uterus got her wondering about the rowdy roosters in her class who have already 'done it' many times with many different little hens. Dashing around the farmyard like that didn't seem all that hygienic to her. She is smart, Sophia, and she understand a thing or two about good medical science. She'll wait not because of any religious morality, but because of a scientific one.

So she has a stand-offish reputation in the farmyard. It has almost become a game for them to peck at her. The roosters are crowing 'cock a diddle do ...'

The hens squawk that Sophia is no different than they are.

In the midst of all this cacophony, I decided last week to paint Sophia a special Valentine's gift. Sometimes I find a good reason to paint. When my friend Salome was expecting her first baby I painted her *La Reine des Diamants* (The Queen of Diamonds), which celebrates her happiness in being a mother. When another friend Rachel married last December I painted her a gift of an ornate vase with three peacock feathers titled *Les Trois Plumes de Paon* (the Three Peacock Feathers). I have a French – Canadian heritage and when I produce a work of art I like giving the works French names.

For Sophia I am painting something special ... a tribute to her unique character. It is titled *Oiseau de Paradis* which is a majestic female Bird of Paradise which other birds can only admire from a distance for her poise and plumage, but can never get close enough to woo her ... unless she lets them. The vestal Sophia is without doubt a Bird of Paradise.

Last night as I sat and worked into the late hours on *Oiseau de Paradis* I thought I might even make the piece into a triptych, with Sophia's Valentine's gift the right hand side, the left hand painting a Peacock in full plumage and the middle canvas a plain nest with one little fuzzy and awkward looking baby bird. If I make it into a triptych I won't tell her about the other two paintings until she is married and then I might give her the other canvases. You guessed it about the nest and the little fuzzy one. To me a baby is a gift from God, a gift that is admirable beyond words.

It has been many years since I have had my own true Valentine's. My heart doesn't beat as warmly as someone half my age. My feathers have been ruffled

a few times too many by hysterical hens. I am past the age of roosting on fences and crowing. I know I am destined for the soup pot in the not too distant future.

If all I do this Valentine's is commend Sophia for her principles, then I will have paid fitting homage to my friend who is, without question, une Oiseau de Paradis.



**Oiseau de Paradis (now hanging on Sophia's wall)**

### ***Interview of Anna and her Kinbaku...***

Patrick: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for our Magazine.

Anna: I will let you interview me if you promise to keep me anonymous.

Patrick: Yes, I will.

Anna: Good ... ask me anything that you like.

Patrick: Anything?

Anna: Yes, anything.

Patrick: That's pretty open-ended ...

Anna: I am very open minded.

Patrick: Well, you sent me some rather interesting pictures. I understand you partake in the Japanese art forms of *Kinbaku* and *Shibari*.

Anna: Yes ...

Patrick: Can you explain the difference?

Anna: Both are Japanese bondage art. *Kinbaku* literally means “tight binding” while *Shibari* merely means “binding.”

Patrick: Which of the two forms do you prefer?

Anna: I started with *Shibari* for a year or so then went on to *Kinbaku*.

Patrick: I have never watched either in person, but I have watched a few films about the practice. I understand *Kinbaku* is quite intense.

Anna: It can be very intense. You have to work with an experienced *Kinbaku* sensei or Master. You should not try this at home. If you are interested I would recommend a resource like <https://www.laquartacorda.it/en/nawame/>

Patrick: When and what got you interested in bondage as an art form?

Anna: In being tied up ... {giggle} ... while it started when I was only nine. It was summer and I was wearing a two piece bathing suit and I let some boys at camp tie me to a tree and blindfold me ...

Patrick: Weren't you scared?

Anna: Naw ... I found it really exciting.

Patrick: How old were they?

Anna: My age ... I was a tom boy ... I liked hanging out with the boys ... but to be honest I had hopes ... but nothing bad really happened!

Patrick: May I ask what you let them do?

Anna: What do you think?

Patrick: I don't know ...

Anna: Boys will be boys ... they were curious to see what a girl looked like ... so I let them look. And then ...

Patrick: And then?

Anna: A girl will be a girl too {giggle}

Patrick: And so what do you do?

Anna: I got to watch the three elephants wag their trunks ... you boys are so cute when you are young.

Patrick: Only when we are young?

Anna: Yes ... then well ... they grow too big and bushy ... your trunks!

Patrick: You have your preferences?

Anna: Well to be honest, yes ... My first look at boy's bits has etched in my mind the sense that penises should be small and soft.

Patrick: Is that your preference?

Anna: Yes, I still prefer them that way. None of my boy friends have been big ... {giggle} You're probably wondering whether I prefer them cut or not?

Patrick: Well, since you bring that up.

Anna: Most women prefer their men cut. {giggle} Are you?

Patrick: We really don't know each other that well.

Anna: {giggle} Well ...

Patrick: I am Catholic ...let's leave it at that!

Anna: That sort of answers my question. {giggle} I like Catholic boys!

Patrick: Let's change the subject shall we?

Anna: Sure ... let's {giggle}

Patrick: I noticed in your pictorials that you are glabrated ...

Anna: Glab what! What does that mean?

Patrick: What do you think it means?

Anna: {giggle} Smooth ... hairless ... like a little girl.

Patrick: Yes, it means smooth or hairless.

Anna: Why didn't you just say so to begin with!

Patrick: It sort of not the thing a man asks a women is it?

Anna: There are lots of questions you are asking me that seem more intimate. But this is not one of them! ... There is a practical reason for being glabrated ... there I have said it ... when you do *Kinbaku*.

Patrick: And what is that?

Anna: I will let you figure it out.

Patrick: I guess you don't want your hair pinched by the ropes.

Anna: {giggle} Exactly. The first time I did *Kinbaku* I had not shaved and well ... ever had your hair plucked one by one off your *source de vie* {she



used a four letter word, which we do not print in our magazine.} it is quite painful.

Patrick: I imagine it is.

Anna: Yes it is. I hear that picking hair is a torture used by some.

Patrick: How do you do it? Do you use waxing, a razor, a shaver, an epilator or tweezer?

Anna: The first time I went and had a Brazilian done. I didn't really enjoy having a perfect stranger doing this, even if she was a woman. Besides, have you ever had a Brazilian? OMG!

Patrick: What did you do instead?

Anna: I tried a razor but read that it leaves little knicks that bacteria can get into so after a few close calls ... {giggle} I don't know if I should tell you this but I managed to cut myself down there and it bled for quite some time. It even left a scar. I don't recommend a razor ...next I tried a shaver, but it can't get into the tight corners and folds that girls have ... so I tried tweezers ... instead of all at once I do a few hairs each day and scattered around so I was not plucking all at one spot. Some women use creams and other epilators, but I am fine with tweezers. Besides it costs less. I pluck when I am in the bath.

Patrick: Sounds like a lot of work ... you must really enjoy your *Kinbaku*.  
But isn't being bound tightly in *Kinbaku* also painful?

Anna: It is, but in a different sort of way.

Patrick: In what ways?

Anna: Your circulation is cut and parts of you can begin to feel numb.

Patrick: What parts?

Anna: Depending as to how you are bound ... your legs, your feet, your arms, your hands, your breasts {giggle} your *source de vie* {she used a four letter word, which we do not print in our magazine.}

Patrick: When you do *Kinbaku* how long are you bound up?

Anna: The longest I have allowed was forty five minutes. Some are bound for much longer than that.

Patrick: How much longer?

Anna: Hours ... even days, depending on the binding.

Patrick: Do you decide on the binding?

Anna: Yes, how the *nawa* is applied and where is entirely left to the model to decide.

Patrick: *Nawa*?

Anna: *Nawa* is Japanese for Rope. Some prefer un-waxed *nawa* and some prefer waxed. I prefer waxed.

Patrick: When it comes to choosing a binding, where do you get your ideas?

Anna: There are many sources, but one I turn to quite often is <https://kokoro-kinbaku.com/>. There is also a great collection of Kitan Club Magazines at archive.org: <https://archive.org/details/kitanclub>

Patrick: What is the Kitan Club?

Anna: Just go take a look at the Kitan Club Magazines ... you'll figure it out!

Patrick: You like being bound. Do you ever do binding?

Anna: Why do you ask? Do you want me to tie you up?

Patrick: No ... I am just curious. For some models they only sit in front of the easel. Some also enjoy being behind the easel and doing their own art.

Anna: No I have never bound another person. I guess I am a bit selfish.

Patrick: I notice in some of your pictorials notes in the naughtiest places.

Anna: You have ... have you! {Giggle} And ...

Patrick: How does it feel?

Anna: Boy ... {giggle} ... you boys will never know. It really turns me on!

Patrick: And where do you do your *Kinbaku*?

Anna: I have always done it close to home, either at my place or my boyfriends ... notice I said friends ... that is key.

Patrick: It what way?

Anna: You are very vulnerable when you are bound and you need to do this with someone you can trust. Don't do this with a stranger and don't do this in a strange place.

Patrick: Are you ever blindfolded?

Anna: Sometimes. It's nice to see what is going on but sometimes it is more erotic not to see ... There is a safety word that is sacrosanct! When you say the word everything stops and it is time to be untied.

Patrick: Ever had any scares?

Anna: Once or twice when I was bound too tightly. But I knew not to panic.

Patrick: Anything else you might want to add?

Anna: Don't bound your breasts too tightly, you can damage them. And don't let someone hang you from the ceiling ... unless you know they know what they are doing! Can I ask you something?

Patrick: Sure ...

Anna: Would you like to come and watch *Kinbaku* sometime?

Patrick: I am not quite sure ...

Anna: {Giggle} I wouldn't want to tie you down ... if you aren't sure ...

Patrick: Thanks for the interview.

Anna: You're welcome.

## Knotty Anna ...



## Kitan Poetry

## ***That Feeling by April Chye***

that feeling  
when I'm on the streets drifting  
past strangers past the spoken words past  
the ghosts of a dead girl's memory where  
an eyelash falls and I unblinking wish  
for a greater existence than one painted  
in crimson, and rained on in  
tears

when headlights loom  
and I stare into the brilliance of  
its pure light – the scene in my head, where the man turns into satyr  
strikes the girl thrice and walks away,  
fades out into harsh glares as  
flesh meets thought  
with death as a  
dream

and as a beautiful boy comes in  
with an air that hums with life  
and cares for nothing more than the  
girl of a waxen face and honey-burnt eyes before him and  
I consider this immaculate archetype of a species  
while in retrospect remember something of a



flutter in my fingers to say goodbye and  
feel my middle where emptiness now  
resides

so here lies  
the frame of a soul with fractures that  
might have stitched up at  
another train stop, if trains could veer  
off the track they were made to travel forth  
on and welcome aboard a boy  
with his sun-spersed hands and tender smile but  
we all make our own graves and mine  
has been perfectly placed and perfectly  
preserved up till  
now

that feeling tells me  
this is what happens before  
a phoenix meets  
flame

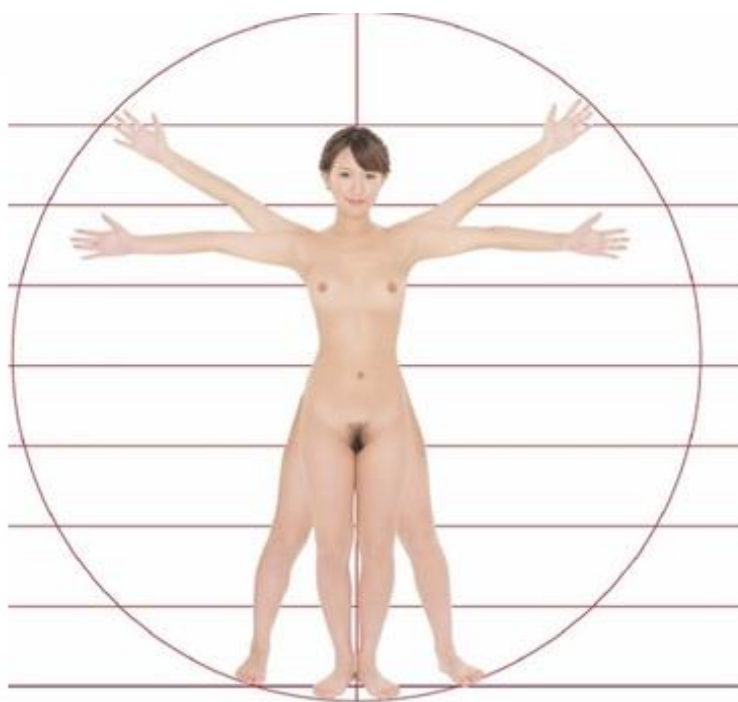
## ***The Self Confined Gate by Wing Wing Fung***

A notion of freedom  
a thought that controls ...  
You can't release the burden  
for it consumes the heart tolls.

The self contained gate  
that fuels your hate ...  
For no longer i think straight  
i'm easily phased.

The training of self  
to not dwell in human hell ...  
to look past mindless thoughts  
has eased you a great lot.

## Pictorial Vitruvian Ume



## ***Two Poems by Cindy Xu***

### **Goodbye**

i want to say goodbye  
to a place i never could  
cause home is where i left my heart  
and maybe i never should've  
i can map it out from edge to edge  
i know it like the back of my hand  
all i am is here in this city  
i'm still trying to understand  
this place called home - i've grown so attached  
devising a dream  
on i turn time back  
are you afraid? cause i am  
i'm so stuck in the past  
i want to say goodbye  
so that i can grow at last.

### **Another One for Zero**

oh my dear,  
i'd do it all again  
because in fairytales and movies

it begins with the end  
our chaotic love story is a heartbreak hotel  
for post-lovers with aching chests  
that they can't seem to dispel  
though you've left my heart all battered and cut  
you are my favorite chapter of my favorite book  
that I can't seem to shut  
so tell me, when you say you'd love me once more  
were you ditzzy nostalgic? or did you mean it  
for sure

## Kitan Art

## ***Succubus Paintings by Olivia Tasaka***

### Artist's Statement

I create art first and foremost as an emotional outlet. The beings and creatures present in my work, sometimes human and sometimes not, are often personifications of a feeling or inspired by my daydreaming. I am somewhat of a maximalist in my artwork and aim to create a canvas that is a unified piece, yet full of hidden details and drawings hidden under layers of paint.

My interest in art started the moment that I could hold a pencil, and from then on I was drawing in the margins of every notebook I owned and experimenting with different mediums whenever I could. I only truly discovered painting about a year ago, and I fell in love with the bright, bold colours and almost infinite layers that acrylic paints provide. I realized that I could create my own world on a blank canvas in a way that didn't feel possible with any other medium. Today, I would describe my art style as being playful and colourful, yet also tinged with darkness. I aim to toe the line between beautiful and grotesque, creating works that can feel both magical and unnerving at the same time.

Olivia Tasaka

Vancouver April, 2021



4 Breadsticks 99 Cheese





Eeb





## I Could Be an Angel





## I Wanna Meet MegaGod





**Romantic Gateway to Mars**





Happiness ...



***Two Life Drawing Sketches of Zoe Zhu by Anonymous***







***A Life Drawing of Male and Female by Cindy Xie***





## ***Bathing Suits by Hayeon Choi***

[**Vancouver**] Hayeon is a local artist of Korean heritage that makes bathing suits. Her website is: <https://hayeonchoi.wixsite.com/my-site/bikinis>















**Hayeon**

### ***A Male Model from the Manga ... Nude Model***

A Japanese girl likes to draw male models and asks the boys from her high school to sit for her.











## Kitan Photography

***Twenty Four Hours in the Life of Chloe by Ani Gavani***

























## ***L'Origine de la Guerre ... by Aki's Sister***

Full title: L'Origine de la Guerre ... As Seen Through my Sister's Eyes

My sister did an art project in Grade 12 that nearly got her expelled from school. The first canvas is the original theme ... *l'Origine de la Guerre*.

The other pictures are from the boys she 'manhandled' over a single month. While she worked on this project. The fourteen boys did not know their toys would appear in art ... and they didn't seem to mind when it did. The whole scandal made my younger sister infamous with the school, and famous with the boys.

























I asked my sister why she likes circumcised boys. She says they smell and taste so much better than boys with foreskin. I can understand what she said!

***Akalako – I thought You Loved Me!***





## ***Self-Portrait by Aki Kurosawa***

I thought long and hard before I made this picture public. I am looking away so it is hard to see my face. But I thought you might be curious what I looked like.



This picture was taken by my sister when we were visiting my grandmother. I was asleep at the time. It was a hot and humid August afternoon.

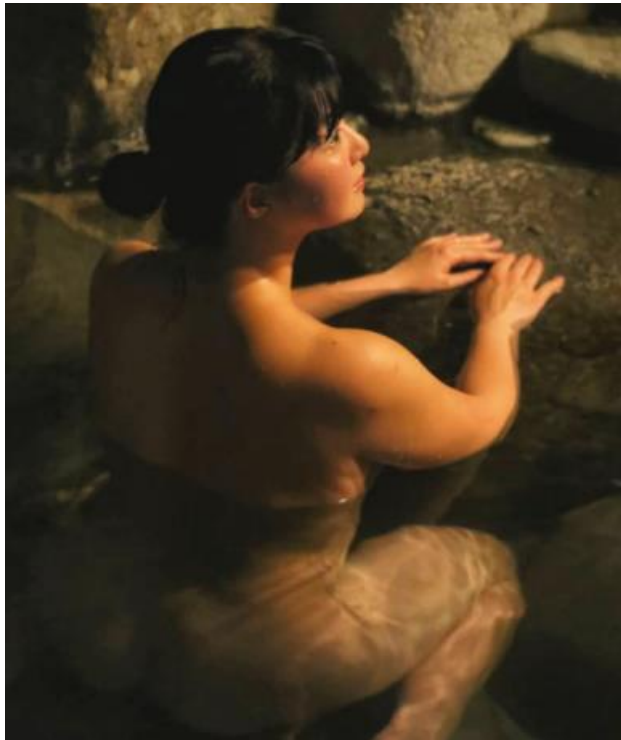
My sister took this picture without asking me permission. But it is such an artistic picture that I could not get angry at her. When I awoke my sister said I was the most beautiful woman she knows. I blushed all over!

Here is a picture taken of me from behind



It is at the little Onsen in my grandmother's village.

Here are pictures my sister took of me at two other Onsen.



***Pictures taken by Aki's sister of some of her girl-friends***



























## *In Atelier with Adam and Jessi by Keiko*

[**Vancouver**] In the old Atelier we had a male and female figurative models come in for a life drawing session. They let me take some reference pictures of them to let me do additional life drawing.











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